

# Molecular mass analysis of murine immunosuppressive immunoglobulin G-binding factors (IgG-BFs) produced by T-cell hybrids

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Received 6 April 1984

Induced and constitutive murine IgG-binding factors (IgG-BFs) have been purified by affinity chromatography from supernatants of T-cells preincubated with or without murine monoclonal IgG1 and IgG2b, respectively. IgG-BF  $M_r$  values have been studied by SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (PAGE) after treatment with SDS under conditions which do not noticeably alter their immunosuppressive activities on the secondary in vitro IgG antibody response. Suppression was recovered at  $M_r$  values of 80000, 40000 and 20000. When induced IgG-BF was tested, the isotype-specific suppressive activity was found only at 40 kDa. The 20-kDa moiety appeared to derive from the 40-kDa component and the material found at 80 kDa exerted non-specific immunosuppressive effects. We conclude therefore that isotype-specific IgG-BF has an apparent  $M_r$  of 40000.

<i>Molecular mass</i>	<i>T-cell hybrid</i>	<i>T-cell factor</i>	<i>Antibody production</i>	<i>Isotype</i>
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*Polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The production of immunoglobulin isotypes is specifically regulated by T-cell factors which are induced by a given isotype and selectively bind to this isotype. These factors have been called immunoglobulin-binding factors (IBF) [1] and found for IgG (IgG-BF) [2], IgE (IgE-BF) [3] and IgA (IgA-BF) [4]. For instance, murine IgG-binding factor produced spontaneously during the incubation of activated T-cells and of T-cell hybrids in serum-free medium at 37°C binds specifically to the Fc portion of IgG [1] and suppresses secondary in vitro antibody responses of IgG1, IgG2a and IgG2b subclasses [1,2]. This factor is called constitutive IgG-BF. Selective induction of the production of subclass isotype-specific IgG-BF is obtained by treatment of T-cell hybrids (T2D4) with monoclonal murine IgG [2]. Incubation of T2D4 cells with IgG1 leads to the production of a factor binding to IgG1 and suppressing

IgG1 antibody synthesis. This factor is called IgG1-BF. Conversely, the incubation of T2D4 with IgG2a and IgG2b monoclonal proteins induces the production of IgG2-BF binding to IgG2a and IgG2b and suppresses both IgG2a and IgG2b antibody responses.

In previous experiments, radiolabeled constitutive IgG-BF purified by affinity chromatography was found, by SDS-PAGE, to be composed of subunits of 38–40 kDa and 18–20 kDa [5,6]. We present here an analysis by SDS-PAGE of the  $M_r$  of constitutive and induced IgG-BF produced by the same cells and pretreated under mild denaturing conditions. The data, based on the suppression of the secondary in vitro IgG anti-sheep red blood cell (SRBC) response, show that (i) isotype-specific IgG-BF appears to have an  $M_r$  of 40000, (ii) the 20-kDa subunit, although biologically active, corresponds to degradation products of the 40-kDa molecule and (iii) induced and constitutive IgG-BFs have similar apparent  $M_r$  values.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1. Hybridoma cells

T2D4 T-cell hybrids were prepared as in [7] by fusion of alloantigen-activated T-cells with BW-5147 T-lymphoma cells.

### 2.2. IgG-BF preparation

Constitutive IgG-BF was isolated from supernatants of T2D4 cells incubated at  $2 \times 10^6$  cells/ml for 2 h at 37°C in serum-free balanced salt solution (BSS) under sterile conditions. When indicated, *p*-methylsulfonylfluoride (PMSF; Sigma, St Louis, MO) at 0.001 M final concentration and aprotinin (Sigma) at 0.1 units/ml were added to cell-free supernatants. Supernatants were 10 times concentrated on Amicon (YM 10) filters, and applied to affinity chromatography columns of Sepharose 4B (Pharmacia, France) coupled with rabbit IgG as in [8]. Material eluting with 0.2 M glycine-HCl buffer (pH 2.8), concentrated to half of the volume of the  $10\times$  supernatant was used as constitutive IgG-BF.

Induced IgG-BFs were prepared from 18-h culture supernatants of T2D4 cells preincubated for 2 h at 37°C with murine monoclonal IgG1 or IgG2b. Supernatants were applied on immunoadsorbents coupled with IgG1 or IgG2b monoclonal proteins. Immunoadsorbents were washed and treated at acid pH [8]. Acid eluates, concentrated to the starting volume, were used as induced IgG-BFs.

### 2.3. SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis

Ninety  $\mu$ l of  $10\times$  concentrated constitutive IgG-BF or of induced IgG-BFs were incubated for 10 min at 70°C with 10  $\mu$ l of 1% SDS, 30  $\mu$ l of glycerol were then added and the mixture was applied and run on to polyacrylamide slab gels [9] as in [10].  $^{125}$ I-labeled BSA and IgG heavy and light chains boiled at 100°C in sample buffer [(1% SDS, 250 mM  $\beta$ -mercaptoethanol ( $\beta$ ME))] were run in parallel and used as size markers. Gel bands corresponding to IgG-BF slots were cut in 0.42-mm slices; slices were incubated for 16 h at 37°C in 0.5 ml RPMI 10% FCS – eluted material was then tested for biological activity at 1/20 final dilution. In some experiments incubation was performed in 0.5 mM Tris-HCl buffer (pH 6.8). The eluate of the slice located at 40 kDa was then

treated with 0.1% SDS for 10 min at 70°C and applied on a second gel.

### 2.4. Biological assays

One ml cell suspension containing  $6-8 \times 10^6$  spleen cells from mice injected 7 days before with  $10^8$  SRBC were restimulated with SRBC and cultured in RPMI 10% FCS supplemented with 1% horse serum. Five days later, indirect plaque-forming cell (PFC) numbers were evaluated [11]. Total IgG plaques were developed by using a rabbit anti-mouse IgG antiserum at 1/20 final dilution; IgG1 and IgG2b plaques were revealed by using rabbit anti-mouse IgG1 or IgG2b antisera (Litton Bionetics, Kensington, MD) at 1/10 final dilution. IgG-BF-containing samples were added to cell cultures at day 0.

## 3. RESULTS

Preliminary experiments were performed to determine temperatures at which IgG-BF could be treated with SDS without losing its biological activity. IgG-BF was incubated for 10 min in the presence of 0.1% SDS at temperatures ranging from 0 to 100°C, and then added, at 1:100 final dilution, to secondary in vitro cultures of spleen cells stimulated with SRBC. The results indicated that the suppressive activity of IgG-BF was not significantly modified when it was treated at temperatures up to 70°C (not shown). When incubated under these conditions, size markers such as albumin, ovalbumin and chymotrypsinogen migrated 10–20% less compared to the usual denaturing and reducing conditions (1% SDS, 250 mM  $\beta$ ME) (not shown).

In a second set of experiments, constitutive IgG-BF was run on 12.5% acrylamide gels. Material eluting from each slice was then tested for biological activity on secondary in vitro anti-SRBC responses. Results of a typical experiment are given in fig.1. Suppressive activity was found in the first slice of the gel and into slices corresponding to  $M_r$  42000 and 20000. The suppressive material present at the beginning of the gel migrated on 10% acrylamide gels at  $M_r$  ~75000–80000 (not shown).

Experiments were then designed to investigate the relationships between these 3 different peaks. Pretreatment of IgG-BF by dithiothreitol

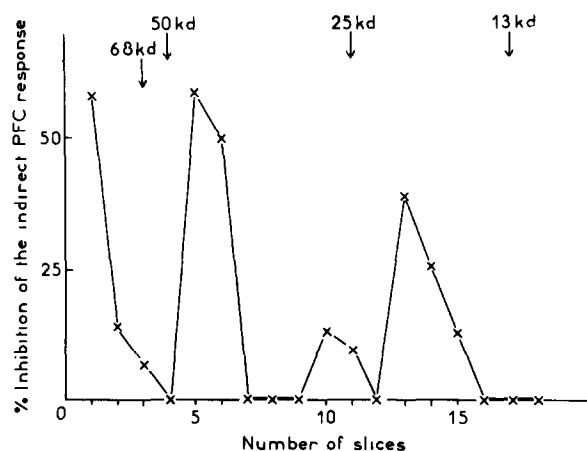


Fig.1. SDS-PAGE (12.5% polyacrylamide gel) of constitutive IgG-BF. Material eluted from slices was added at 1/20 final dilution in a secondary in vitro anti-SRBC response. Values indicate the percentage of inhibition of the indirect IgG PFC responses of duplicate cultures. Control response:  $3220 \pm 108$  IgG PFC/ $10^6$  cells. Arrows indicate positions of size markers.

(0.020 M) did not modify the suppression profile (not shown) suggesting that the higher- $M_r$  molecules were probably not multimers of the 20-kDa chain(s). When proteolytic enzyme inhibitors were added to cell supernatants before IgG-BF purification, biological activity was present in only two peaks located respectively at 80 and 40 kDa (fig.2). No suppressive material was found at 20 kDa. These results indicate that the low- $M_r$  component might correspond to degradation products of higher- $M_r$  molecules.

To investigate further this possibility, suppressive factor migrating at  $M_r$  40000 was eluted, treated with SDS, and rerun on a second gel. Suppressive activity was then found at  $M_r$  18000 (fig.3) providing evidence that the 20-kDa peak corresponds to biologically active degradation products of the 40-kDa molecules. The same kind of experiment was performed with the 80-kDa peak. However, no significant suppressive activity was recovered after migration on a second gel.

In the last set of experiments, induced IgG1-BF was run on polyacrylamide gels under similar conditions. Material eluting from slices was then tested for suppressive activity on the indirect IgG1 anti-SRBC response. In the absence of proteolytic enzyme inhibitors, a suppression profile similar to that of constitutive IgG-BF was found (fig.4) sug-

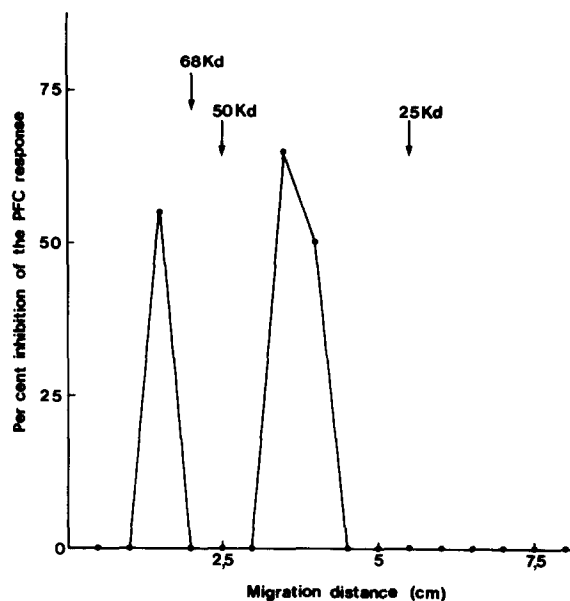


Fig.2. SDS-PAGE (12.5% acrylamide gel) of constitutive IgG-BF prepared in the presence of proteolytic enzyme inhibitors. For details see fig.1. Control response:  $2896 \pm 517$  IgG PFC/ $10^6$  cells.

gesting structural similarity between these factors. In previous experiments, induced IgG-BFs were found to exert, depending on their dilution of use, both isotype-specific and non-specific suppressive effects. The materials eluting from slices located at

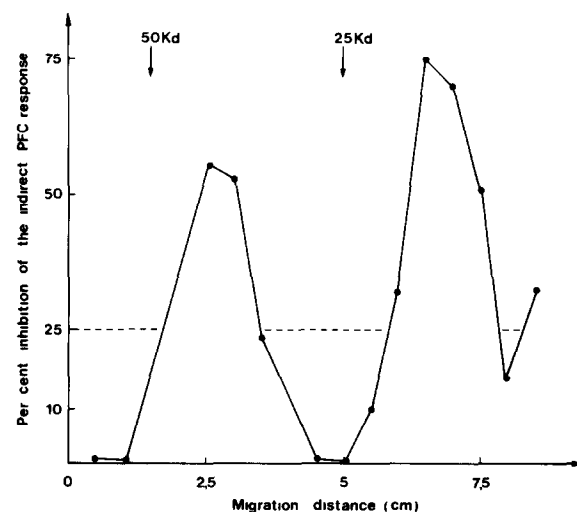


Fig.3. SDS-PAGE (15% polyacrylamide gel) of the 40-kDa component from constitutive IgG-BF. Control response:  $4377 \pm 417$  IgG PFC/ $10^6$  cells.

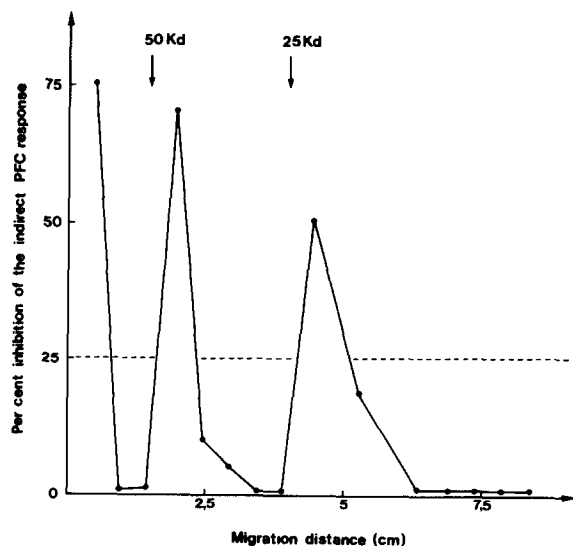


Fig.4. SDS-PAGE (15% polyacrylamide gel) of induced IgG1-BF. Values indicate the percentage of inhibition of the indirect IgG1 PFC response. Control response:  $2670 \pm 842$  IgG PFC/ $10^6$  cells.

80 and 40 kDa were thus tested for their effects on the IgG1 and IgG2b anti-SRBC responses. While the 80-kDa peak from both IgG1-BF and IgG2b-BF was found to suppress both responses, the 40-kDa peak of IgG1-BF inhibited only the IgG1 response and that of IgG2b-BF only the IgG2b

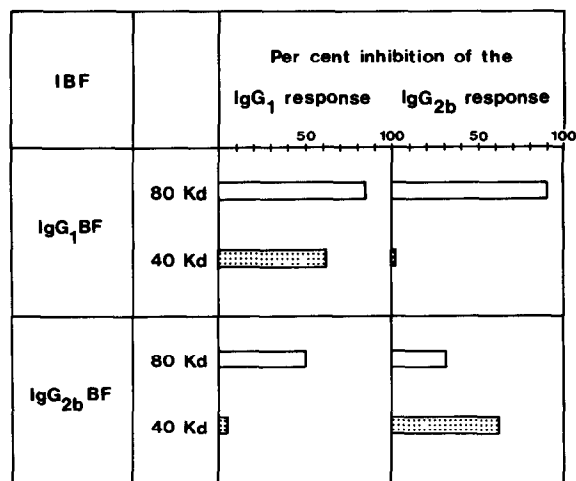


Fig.5. Isotypic specificity of the 80 and 40 kDa components from IgG1-BF and IgG2b-BF. Control anti-SRBC responses:  $1253 \pm 109$  IgG1 PFC/ $10^6$  cells,  $523 \pm 116$  IgG2b PFC/ $10^6$  cells.

response. In conclusion the present data provide evidence that isotype-specific IgG-BF has an  $M_r$  of 40000.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

In this study, our aim was to investigate the  $M_r$  of IgG-BFs under mild denaturing conditions. The suppressive activities related to constitutive and induced IgG-BFs produced by the same T-cell hybrids were found on polyacrylamide gels at 80, 40 and 20 kDa. The 20-kDa peak corresponds to degradation products of the 40-kDa molecule(s) since (i) rerunning of the latter on a second gel gives rise to 20-kDa suppressive molecules and (ii) the 20-kDa peak is absent when proteolytic enzyme inhibitors are added to cell supernatants before purification. These findings, together with the fact that isotype-specific suppressive activity of induced IgG-BFs is present only in the 40-kDa peak, provide evidence that IgG-BF has an  $M_r$  of 40000. They are compatible with our recent results showing that the  $M_r$  of IgG-BF present in translation products of mRNA isolated from the same T-cell hybrids is located at 37 kDa [12]. Radiolabeled IgG-BF produced by T-lymphoma cells and by alloantigen-activated T-cells was also found to be composed of a major chain located at 38–40 kDa which associates under non-reducing conditions into 80-kDa dimers [5,6]. Here, the 80-kDa peak could also correspond to dimers of molecules of smaller  $M_r$  which remain associated under our experimental conditions. However, it cannot be excluded that it corresponds to another immunosuppressive factor binding to IgG but having no isotypic specificity.

Human IgG-BF was found to be composed of a 43-kDa and of higher- $M_r$  polymers of a 23-kDa subunit [13]. Other isotype-specific immunoregulatory T-cell factors, namely the IgE-BFs which regulate the IgE response, have an  $M_r$  around 40000 and 15000 as estimated by Sephadex G-75 gel filtration [14].

In conclusion our data provide evidence that isotype-specific IgG-BF has an apparent  $M_r$  of  $\sim 40000$  when analysed under mild denaturing conditions. Other biochemical properties of this molecule are currently under investigation in our laboratory.

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